

● **Deborah Chambers Chima** reviews leadership coaching fundamentals and provides self-check tools to prevent losing site of your position's true value.



Photo by Mark Aplet

FUNDAMENTALS OF Leadership Coaching

Publicity, promotion, and marketing are important aspects of a successful coaching career. But many times leadership coaches get so wrapped up in these secondary responsibilities that they lose sight of their primary purpose, which is to help clients reach their goals. As competition in the marketplace tightens, organizations focus more and more on improving bottom line results, and people development becomes a critical need.

High potential team members in a company benefit from coaching and create new possibilities and contributions to organizational success. Driving for results and the ability to manage teams are competencies that a leadership coach can enhance.

successfully resolved. Most important, the coach is willing to persevere despite the odds because he or she believes in the client's ability to reach the desired goal.

Successful leadership coaches acquire experience in a variety of personal and professional environments. They have demonstrated the ability to resolve problems and minimize people conflict. Companies choose the coach because he or she is the subject matter expert and is capable of transferring that skill to others.

Leadership coaches thrive on using critical thinking skills that lead to the best solution. Through challenging questions and exercises designed to expose unsuccessful thought processes, they effectively reveal the answers

“**Leadership coaches thrive on using critical thinking skills**”

Although individuals must take responsibility for performance improvement if they desire to reach career objectives, a coach serves as their guide.

In today's business environment, the role of the leadership coach dramatically increases in importance. Review the following leadership coach fundamentals to prevent losing site of your position's true value.

What is a leadership coach?

A leadership coach serves an important role in their service to others. A leadership coach is focused, results-oriented, and usually hired because the client wants or needs support to accomplish a goal. The coach's success lies in his or her ability to assist clients in reaching that potential. The coach is also passionate about supporting the client. This passion typically stems from successfully overcoming problems and obstacles similar to what the client is experiencing. Leadership coaches should have a track record of leading others to the desired goal. As a result of overcoming the odds, he or she understands that every issue can be

to the client's needs. As the client gains confidence in their own abilities, the coach stretches the client's thinking to consider options that may have initially seemed unlikely.

Self-Check – The six critical roles of a leadership coach:

1. Challenge client to dig deeper and create the most viable solutions.
2. Provide feedback that enables clients to realize the answers that lead to their desired solutions.
3. Listen for hidden messages and ensure the client is focused on priorities.
4. Create an environment where clients can trust the process that leads to goal achievement.
5. Seek opportunities to create chaos that allows clients to transcend to the next level of development.
6. Serve as the accountability factor to goal achievement.

Three approaches of leadership coaching

When you work with clients, you'll need to tailor your approach based on the clients' needs. Typically, you'll use one of three approaches to navigate the client towards the desired goals. The three approaches that work best are:

1. **Organizational Coaching**
2. **Team Coaching**
3. **Individual Coaching.**

1. Organizational Coaching

A leadership coach is contracted by retainer to achieve specific organizational objectives, which can range from working directly with the executive team to coaching sessions with assigned staff. For example, they may assist an executive team with creating a strategic organizational process that receives buy-in at all levels. The assigned staff may either be leaders in crisis who have specific developmental needs or potential executives who need to get ready for the next assignment at an accelerated pace.

The client company defines the need prior to approaching and hiring the coach. As a result, the coach that receives the contract has either demonstrated a track record fitting the need, or the coach has developed a relationship with the leadership team. The coach is then given specific assignments within the organization that must lead to the desired goals.

Self-Check – The seven benefits of organizational leadership coaching:

1. Organizational goals are achieved as a result of focused collaboration.
2. Use of external coaches minimizes systemic thinking and behaviors.
3. Potential leaders within the organization can reach succession plan goals at a faster pace.
4. Leaders in temporary crisis can be refocused and careers can be salvaged.
5. Staff creativity to resolve future problems is unleashed.
6. Communication is improved as a result of planned strategy.
7. Simplification of the management change process.

2. Team Coaching

A leadership coach can assist teams with identifying next steps that will accelerate the completion of a project. A team can utilize the expertise of a leadership coach in areas such as analyzing focus group feedback and providing solutions to unresolved issues that prevent the team from accomplishing its goals. The coach can also provide intervention when a team has stalled.

Self-Check – The three benefits of team leadership coaching:

1. Team goals are realized as a result of every team member's voice being heard.
2. Team members learn how to effectively lead others to the desired result.
3. Team members acquire a better awareness and appreciation for effective communication skills.

3. Individual Coaching

Attempting to accomplish difficult work assignments under stressful deadlines can create a need for individuals to hire a leadership coach. A coach may assist individuals by listening and providing insight on issues where a second opinion will create resolution.

Self-Check – The five benefits of individual leadership coaching:

1. Achievement of client goals at an accelerated pace.
2. Clarity of client needs is defined.
3. Collaborative approach with client leads to greater results.
4. Creation of actionable client action plans.
5. Awareness of client potential is increased.

Challenges of leadership coaching

Like any other profession, leadership coaches face their share of occupational challenges. The biggest challenge lies in delivering the behavioral changes the client needs to make. Many times, people resist change because of the effort involved. Despite the odds, the coach must successfully guide the client to the realization that the effort is well worth the rewards.

The second challenge occurs when non-leadership behaviors are systemic. The coach must decide if the amount of effort required is worth the frustration of consistently reinforcing the needed behavior at every level of the organization.

Another common challenge occurs when organizations don't have a strategic vision or the ability to stick to the defined goals. The ability to allow the client to redefine and reinvent requires a coach who understands the importance of going through every step of the process that gets the client to the finish line.



Every great leadership coach thrives on making the desired impact that leads clients to achieving their goals and beyond. But a loss of focus on the true purpose of the profession hurts the coach and his or her clients as well. When you use these Self-Checks and periodically review the fundamentals of the profession, you can prevent a loss of focus and succeed at better helping your current clients, and all your clients in the future. ●

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